Satellite Imagery to Map and Prospect Diamonds

5251. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether statellite imagery is being used to map and prospect diamonds in the country;

(b) if so, the States where work is being done;

(c) the companies which are engaged in this work; and

(d) the result of diamonds prospecting during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Satellite Imagery and aerial photography are being used to identify prospective areas as supporting tool to locate kimberlite/lamproite bodies which normally host diamonds in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

(c) As per information received from Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), seven companies have been granted Prospecting Licences/Reconaissance Permits for exploration for diamond and other precious minerals in theState of Andhra Pradesh. Out of the seven companies three companies *i.e.* National Mineral Development Corporation Limited (NMDC), M/s. De-Beers and M/s. Geo Mysore Services (India) Pvt. Ltd. have proposed to use Satellite Imagery and Remote Sensing for exploration of Diamonds.

(d) The results of prospecting by these companies are yet to be received. However, during the last three years GSI has identified Kimberlite/ Lamproite pipes and plugs in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh, Gulbarga and Raichur district of Karnataka and Bargarh district of Orissa based on integration of remote sensing and aerogeophysical data followed by ground evaluation. Micro diamonds have been recovered from Tumkur district in Karnataka from stream sediments based on such studies.

Growth rate in Mining Sector

5252. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the growth rate in mining sector has been lower in April-February, 2001-02 as compared to the same months in the year 2000-01;